

How to Prepare Guide

for the

Correctional Sergeant - 60712 Selection Procedure

with the
State of Alabama



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I. Introduction

A new selection procedure has been developed for the job of Correctional Sergeant. Your application indicates that you meet the qualifications for this job, and as such, you are invited to participate in the Correctional Sergeant selection procedure. This guide is designed to acquaint you with the job of Correctional Sergeant and the specific details of the selection procedure. **Please read this information carefully. ALL candidates should review the entire Guide thoroughly.** It is important that you know what to expect before taking the test.

Job Background Information

The job of Correctional Sergeant is with the State of Alabama Department of Corrections and carries the rank of Sergeant. Employees in this class supervise a small unit of correctional officers. Employees in this class are responsible for scheduling and leading a unit of correctional officers in the security coverage of an assigned area. Employees also perform as relief for higher level supervisors. Work is performed under direct supervision of higher level correctional officers and is reviewed for compliance with specific security rules and practices and with institutional policies and procedures. Performance is checked through inspections, conferences, and reports.

Employees in this job classification work in correctional institutions throughout the state. Specific job openings are filled by the Alabama Department of Corrections from a list of eligible candidates provided by State Personnel.

II. Selection Procedure Development Process

Background Information

The first step in developing a selection procedure for a State Merit System job is to gather background information about the job. This is done to make sure that the test is job related and fair. We used individuals currently employed as Correctional Sergeants with the State of Alabama and their supervisors to gather this information. This process is called a ***job analysis***.

Through this process, the activities performed on the job were identified and separated into specific ***work behavior and task statements***. After identifying these work behaviors and tasks, we identified the specific competencies that Correctional Sergeants must have in order to effectively perform all of the work behaviors and corresponding tasks. These competencies were broken into three categories: ***knowledge, skills, and abilities***.

To complete this job analysis process, we asked Correctional Sergeants and their supervisors to rate each work behavior and task statement as well as each knowledge, skill, and ability statement. These ratings identified which work behaviors, tasks, and competencies are most important to effective job performance. The selection procedure developed by the State Personnel Department measures many of the important knowledges and abilities required for the job of Correctional Sergeant.

When the study was completed and all the job information had been gathered, the results showed that an employee newly promoted to the position of Correctional Sergeant must be able to perform numerous important duties. These duties are described in detail on the following two pages.

- Schedules and assigns tasks to area personnel to include post, monitoring or escorting inmates, frisking duties, stewarding, visitation yard, tower, and shift by rotation, rank, experience, utilization plan/strategy or seniority.
- Evaluates personnel through reports, Performance Appraisal, radio operations, and on-site monitoring.
- Reviews records completed by subordinates and inmates to include incident reports, disciplinary reports, logs, letters, schedules, leave requests, affidavits, complaints, and other forms.
- Monitors subordinates in facility to include non-security personnel such as stewards, canteen workers, recreation, industry personnel, medical personnel and administration services in order to evaluate performance, control facility operations and activities.
- Schedules leave to include holiday, annual, sick, and FMLA, by seniority, date of request, remaining coverage, health, orders, and quarterly reports.
- Trains subordinates on issues such as scheduling, paperwork, task assignment, and evaluating and training personnel.
- Monitors subordinate correctional officers on their posts in order to ensure compliance with duty station obligations.
- Documents incidents as needed for disciplinary actions and performance appraisals.
- Escorts inmates to and from dinner, farm, outside work, industries work, exercise yard, hearings, infirmary, segregation, and other facilities.
- Stands watch on a post in order to ensure safety, order, and policy adherence.
- Transports inmates by car, bus or on foot using proper restraints such as handcuffs, belts, and chains and following ADOC policies and procedures and institutional SOPs for disciplinary, reclassification, segregation, Death Row, employment, medical or other emergencies, and public relations.
- Monitors inmates at squad checkouts, work crews, and industries in order to maintain security and accountability.
- Makes decisions regarding inmate discipline, detention status, and treatment plans in order to rehabilitate him/her for security.
- Operates security devices for use in transporting inmates or securing them during altercations.
- Counts inmates in order to detect escapes.
- Searches inmate rooms, bunks, chests, and person, facilities, fences, and officers for illegal contraband, safety to include fire code violations, security breaches, evidence of odd/unusual activity, dress codes, maintenance needs, cleanliness, adherence to policy and order.
- Search/frisk inmates, employees, and visitors in order to ensure weapons and contraband do not enter the facility and to check for injuries.
- Coordinates security for special measures such as holiday gifts, church meetings, and special events in order to provide incentives and ensure control.
- Responds to or assists in capturing and subduing in order to maintain order, safety, and protect society.
- Determines appropriate responses to incidents in order to maintain order.
- Maintains files with documentation of incidents, fights, and emergencies.

- Monitors inmate movement in order to maintain order, feed, work and exercise in accordance with institute SOPs and ADOC regulations, detect escapes and visitors and to determine expected population in facility.
- Testifies at classification, court, and disciplinary hearings.
- Investigates incidents involving staff and inmates.
- Supervises special programs such as Death Row, training, and transportation to include another facility, court, work, security section or hospital.
- Serves on progress review, segregation review, job board, classification, disciplinary hearings or witness in court.
- Schedules and coordinates the visiting program in order to ensure incentive, order, and monitor illegal activity to include sexual and contraband.
- Seeks sources of employment for Work Release inmates.
- Composes forms, reports, and correspondence on incidents in order to document actions, schedule coverage, and relay information/instructions.
- Orders/distributes supplies in order to replace worn/damaged items and to ensure ready availability.
- Reads and understands rules, regulations, policies, procedures, laws, equipment operating instructions and their changes.
- Communicates orally, in writing, or by e-mail in order to give/receive information/instructions, refer questions to appropriate person, hours and pay.
- Qualifies annually on the proper and accurate use of firearms in order to meet APOST certification requirements and protect fellow officers, and the public.
- Operates motor vehicles for patrol and the transportation of inmates, ADOC personnel, and equipment.
- Determines internal security status such as lockdown or relaxed, to protect, discipline, and motivate inmates and to search for contraband.

Knowledges, Skills, and Abilities

In order to be an effective Correctional Sergeant, employees must possess the following knowledges, skills, and abilities.

Correctional Sergeant Knowledges

- Knowledge of ADOC rules and regulations, policies and procedures as needed to adhere to them, enforce them, and train subordinates.
- Knowledge of Institution SOPs as needed to pre-determine appropriate actions in possible circumstances and for uniformity of response within facility.
- Knowledge of ADOC Administrative Regulations (AR) as needed to perform uniformly, understand programs and to educate self and subordinates on appropriate behavior and standards.
- Knowledge of ADOC AR's 206, 208, 213, 220, 307, 313, 403, and 409 as needed to understand proper decorum among inmates and staff, and disciplinary/grievance handling procedures.
- Knowledge of Risk Management as needed to prevent and report injuries.
- **Knowledge of employment law to include FLSA, ADA, FMLA, and harassment/discrimination guidelines as needed to assign tasks, leave, schedule, and monitor treatment of subordinates.**
- **Knowledge of the 4th amendment to the U.S. Constitution and a person's rights against illegal search and seizure as needed to investigate inmate's beds, trunks, and**

clothing, search visitors and employees, their cars, and possessions.

- Knowledge of the 5th amendment to the U.S. Constitution and a person's rights against self-incrimination as needed to investigate incidents.
- **Knowledge of speedy hearing regulations as needed to meet ADOC and civil rights' due process regulations.**
- Knowledge of fire codes for the institution as needed to maintain safety and to evacuate personnel.
- **Knowledge of laws that are related to inmate rights and treatment.**
- **Knowledge of OSHA-like safety regulations as needed to protect facility personnel to include inmates, comply with laws, and for inspection.**
- Knowledge of environmental and health regulations as needed to protect facility personnel to include inmates, comply with laws, and for inspection.
- Knowledge of facility layout as needed to schedule posts and inmate movement and determine security blind-spots (hiding areas).
- Knowledge of techniques used to calm inmates and to entice them to behave and rehabilitate.
- **Knowledge of ADOC Inmate Handbook as needed to know their rights, privileges, and duties.**
- **Knowledge of "10" codes as needed for radio communication and to alert coworkers to your status.**
- Knowledge of ADOC radio procedures as needed for security checks and responses.

Correctional Sergeant Skills

- Skill to operate firearms in a safe and accurate manner as needed for continued APOST certification, stopping fleeing or unruly personnel and to protect facility personnel and society
- Skill to obtain and maintain a valid Alabama Driver's License as needed for continued APOST certification, to transport inmates, personnel, and equipment, pursue escapees, and to patrol facility grounds.

Correctional Sergeant Abilities

- Ability to communicate orally as needed to give/receive information/instructions and solicit potential employers.
- Ability to communicate in writing using proper grammar and sentence structure as needed to complete forms and writes reports, policies, and correspondence.
- Ability to read and understand documents written at various technical and legal levels such as departmental regulations, operating instructions, correspondence, administrative rules/procedures, and forms as needed to receive information/instructions.
- **Ability to perform simple mathematical calculations involving addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of whole numbers, decimals, fractions, and percentages for Performance Appraisal, duty logs, staffing needs, and room organization.**
- Ability necessary to pursue or subdue an inmate as needed to protect self or others and to regain/maintain order.
- Ability to keep legal and personal information confidential as needed to not violate civil rights, exacerbate potential problems or impede investigations.
- Ability to supervise officers as needed to ensure required duties are performed and to provide guidance.
- Ability to lead meetings on disciplinary actions.

- **Ability to compose a schedule for workers to include 40-hr schedule, coverage, and leave as needed to ensure security and orderly operations of facility.**
- **Ability to analyze information and reach logical conclusions as needed to assign tasks, assess guilt and discipline and analyze current policy.**
- Ability to work under deadlines to include multiple projects as needed to adhere to policy, maintain security and order, complete reports, occupy posts, and document actions.
- **Ability to handle staff management as needed to determine necessary posts to cover in the event of shortages or emergencies.**
- Ability to compose policies on issues such as leave and scheduling requests as needed for documented fairness.
- Ability to compose a schedule for inmate movement and shakedowns in accordance with ADOC regulations and SOPs.
- Ability to remain calm and clear-headed in a crisis.
- Ability to solve problems as needed to supervise and counsel subordinates, maintain order and safety, and ensure unity of command.
- Ability to handle harassment complaints as needed to conform to law and ensure pleasant and fair working/living conditions.
- Ability to make decisions such as needed to protect, discipline and motivate inmates.
- Ability to supervise support services as needed to ensure viable operations.
- Ability to be assertive as needed to calm inmates, assign tasks, correct subordinate performance and change policies.
- Ability to delegate as needed to cover the needs of the institution, train replacement, and for time management.
- Ability to lead training of subordinate officers as needed to ensure adherence to the rules and policies, and safe operation of equipment.
- Ability to operate restraint devices as needed to transport and control inmates and to protect self, staff, other inmates, and society.
- Ability to testify in court as needed to provide accurate account of actions and to explain procedures.
- Ability to stand for long periods of time as needed to monitor a post/cell.
- Ability to determine appropriate response to emergency situations such as riots, fires, or natural disasters.
- Ability to traverse uneven terrain as needed to watch work crews inspect facility and its grounds or trail fleeing inmates.
- Ability to work alone in an area of the facility as needed to cover required posts for observing, controlling, or separating inmates.
- Ability to remain objective as needed for investigations, disciplinary actions, grievances, and responses.
- Ability to perceive mood and actions of inmates as needed to predict potential problems.

The knowledges and abilities listed above that appear in **BOLD** print are being measured with the selection procedure. The knowledges and abilities in plain text are not being measured due to measurement constraints, or will be measured by other means (e.g., annual firearms training and certification). New Correctional Sergeants will be observed on the job to ensure that they possess these critical competencies.

III. Selection Procedure Description

Correctional Sergeant Performance Dimensions

For the purposes of exam development, the knowledges and abilities appearing in bold print were grouped into performance dimensions. The dimensions are comprised of knowledges and abilities that are naturally related to one another. Each dimension constitutes one section of the written exam. The dimensions are described below in detail.

Exam Section I: Legal Issues Related to Inmates

This section of the exam is designed to measure your knowledge of Alabama Department of Corrections rules and regulations related to the rights and treatment of inmates. Questions in this section are based on the following specific knowledges.

- Knowledge of the 4th amendment to the U.S. Constitution and a person's rights against illegal search and seizure as needed to investigate inmate's beds, trunks, and clothing, search visitors and employees, their cars, and possessions.
- Knowledge of speedy hearing regulations as needed to meet ADOC and civil rights' due process regulations.
- Knowledge of laws that are related to inmate rights and treatment.
- Knowledge of Inmate Handbook as needed to know their rights, privileges, and duties.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

According to Alabama Department of Corrections rules and regulations, which of the following statements is **TRUE**?

- I. Visiting law enforcement officers, employees, or other persons authorized by statute to bear firearms are required to maintain possession and control of their firearms at all times.
 - II. No employee-owned firearms will be stored in institutional weapons storage.
- A. I only
 - B. II only
 - C. Both I and II
 - D. Neither I nor II

Key: D
Source: Administration Regulation #409

Exam Section II: Legal Issues Related to Staff and Facilities

This section of the exam is designed to measure your knowledge of Alabama Department of Corrections rules and regulations related to employees of the Alabama Department of Corrections. Questions in this section are based on the following specific knowledges:

- Knowledge of employment law to include FLSA, ADA, FMLA, and harassment/discrimination guidelines as needed to assign tasks, leave, schedule, and monitor treatment of subordinates.
- Knowledge of OSHA-like safety regulations as needed to protect facility personnel to include inmates, comply with laws, and for inspection.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

According to Alabama Department of Corrections rules and regulations, which of the following statements is **TRUE?**

- I. The employee's immediate supervisor should give oral reprimands to the employee with a witness present.
 - II. During an oral reprimand, the employee should be allowed to explain his or her side of the controversy.
-
- A. I only
 - B. II only
 - C. Both I and II
 - D. Neither I nor II

Key: B
Source: Administrative Regulation #208

Exam Section III: ADOC Policies and Procedures

This section of the exam is designed to measure your knowledge of general Alabama Department of Corrections policies and procedures. Questions in this section are based on the following specific knowledges:

- Knowledge of ADOC rules and regulations, policies and procedures as needed to adhere to them, enforce them, and train subordinates.
- Knowledge of Institution SOPs as needed to pre-determine appropriate actions in possible circumstances and for uniformity of response within facility.
- Knowledge of ADOC AR's 206, 208, 213, 307, and 403 as needed to understand proper decorum among inmates and staff, and disciplinary/grievance handling procedures.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

According to the EEO complaint procedures, an employee alleging discrimination must initiate Step One of the complaint process to his/her immediate supervisor within how many days of the occurrence causing the complaint?

- A. 7 employee work days
- B. 5 employee work days
- C. 5 calendar days
- D. None of the above

Key: B

Source: Administrative Regulation #206

Exam Section IV: Radio 10 Codes

This section of the exam is designed to measure your knowledge of the radio “10” codes used by the Alabama Department of Corrections

- Knowledge of “10” codes as needed for radio communication and to alert coworkers to your status.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

“Code 10-5” means “Relay”. Which of the following is the correct explanation of this code?

- A. J1 – Personnel; J2 – Property; J3 – Prisoner; J4 – Papers.
- B. J1 – Property; J2 – Personnel; J3 – Prisoner; J4 – Papers.
- C. J1 – Personnel; J2 – Property; J3 – Papers; J4 – Prisoner.
- D. J1 – Personnel; J2 – Papers; J3 – Prisoner; J4 – Property.

Key: A

Source: Radio 10 Codes.

Exam Section V: Resource Management and Organization

This section of the exam is designed to measure your ability to manage resources, schedule shifts of employees, and perform simple mathematical problems. In this section, you are given several scenarios that are similar to those encountered by Correctional Sergeant employees with the Alabama Department of Corrections. For each scenario, you will be required to read the information provided carefully and then respond to each question related to that scenario. You will be required to base your responses only on the information provided and not use any prior knowledge or experience in responding. The following specific abilities were used to develop the items:

- Ability to perform simple mathematical calculations involving addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of whole numbers, decimals, fractions, and percentages for Performance Appraisal, duty logs, staffing needs, and room organization.
- Ability to compose a schedule for workers to include 40-hr schedule, coverage, and leave as needed to ensure security and orderly operations of facility.
- Ability to handle staff management as needed to determine necessary posts to cover in the event of shortages or emergencies.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

At XYZ correctional facility, it is policy to have 5 Correctional Officer I's for every 50 inmates and 1 Correctional Sergeant for every 15 Correctional Officer I's. If there are 300 inmates, there should be

- A. 6 COs and 10 SGTs
- B. 20 COs and 4 SGTs
- C. 30 COs and 2 SGTs
- D. None of the above

Key: C

Explanation: 50 goes into 300 a total of 6 times. If 5 COs are needed for every 50 inmates, then 30 COs are needed (since $6 \times 5 = 30$). 15 goes into 30 a total of 2 times. If 1 SGT is needed for every 15 COs, then 2 SGTs are needed. The final answer is 30 COs and 2 SGTs.

Exam Section VI: Reading and Analyzing Information

In this section of the exam, you will be given several reading passages that are similar to those found in Alabama Department of Corrections Institutional Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). You are to read each section and respond to the questions **using only the information contained in the passages**. You should not base your answers on any prior knowledge of the issue addressed in the reading passage. The following specific abilities were identified and used to develop the items in this section.

- Ability to communicate in writing using proper grammar and sentence structure as needed to complete forms and writes reports, policies, and correspondence.
- Ability to read and understand documents written at various technical and legal levels such as departmental regulations, operating instructions, correspondence, administrative rules/procedures, and forms as needed to receive information/instructions.
- Ability to analyze information and reach logical conclusions as needed to assign tasks, assess guilt and discipline and analyze current policy.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

Reading Passage

RESPONSIBILITY: The On-duty Shift Commander is responsible for insuring that all officers under his/her supervision have knowledge of this procedure and that evidence and contraband are properly handled. The Shift Commander will insure that the discovering officer in all incidents involving physical evidence maintains security, custody, and control of the item until it is properly secured. The discovery officer will place an identification mark on the evidence, whenever possible in order that the item can be later identified.

The item will be placed in a container, envelope, folder, plastic bag, etc. which can be properly sealed. Body fluids (blood, etc) should never be sealed inside a plastic container bag, as it will destroy the evidence. The officer will seal the container and will attach to the container the following information: date, time, discovering officer's full name, location where evidence was found and if applicable the suspected inmate's name and AIS number. An original and one copy of the Evidence form will be properly filled out and attached to the container, which contains the evidence. The Shift Commander will review the Evidence Form to insure that it has been properly filled out.

1. Which of the following pieces of information is **NOT** needed on a container holding evidence?
 - A. date and time
 - B. location where evidence was found
 - C. discovering officer's full name
 - D. description of evidence

Key: D

IV. Studying for the Selection Procedure

Strategies for Studying

The following suggestions may help you in preparing for the Correctional Sergeant selection procedure. These are merely suggestions, and do not guarantee success on any component of the procedure. You may have additional strategies that you have used successfully in the past. Preparing for the selection procedure is your responsibility, and you may adopt whatever approach you feel is helpful and appropriate.

- Read, review, and study the documents which are listed below. Try to think of realistic work situations in which you might be required to apply the information contained in those documents.
- Practice working out simple mathematical problems.
- Practice using a calculator and working out answers without a calculator.
- Practice reading and reviewing short passages. You may want to practice underlining or highlighting important information.
- In your regular work activities of the next few weeks, monitor your written work for clarity and for grammatical errors. Have someone review your written work and provide feedback.

Resource Materials

In order to ensure that the written examination for Correctional Sergeant accurately tests the knowledge of various Alabama Department of Corrections policies and procedures, the State Personnel Department obtained from the Alabama Department of Corrections copies of many of the Administrative Regulations and other documents. These documents were then used to develop test items for sections I through IV of the written examination. The following list includes all Alabama Department of Corrections resources that were used to develop those test items.

- **Inmate Handbook**
- **Radio “10” Codes (Codes 10-01 through 10-25 only)**
- **Administration Regulation #200**
- **Administration Regulation #205**
- **Administration Regulation #206**
- **Administration Regulation #208**
- **Administration Regulation #213**
- **Administration Regulation #227**
- **Administration Regulation #302**
- **Administrative Regulation #307**
- **Administrative Regulation #313**
- **Administration Regulation #403**
- **Administrative Regulation #409**

In preparing to take the written examination, you are strongly encouraged to read, review, and study each of these documents. The test items developed from these resources are straightforward and are not designed to “trick” candidates. The information contained in these documents is information that Correctional Sergeants should know and use daily on the job. For these reasons, **you will NOT be allowed to bring these resources with you to the**

examination, NOR will you be supplied with these documents by the State Personnel Department during the examination.

V. Selection Procedure Administration

You will receive a card in the mail from the State Personnel Department approximately two weeks prior to the examination informing you of the time and location for the written examination.

Restroom breaks will be permitted during the exam, and instructions regarding such breaks will be given at the test site. Food and beverages are permitted in the test room, but must be kept off of the testing tables and must **NOT** cause distraction to other test takers. In other words, do not bring food items in wrappers that will distract other candidates when opened.

You may bring a calculator to use for the Correctional Sergeant written test. Small solar powered or battery operated calculators that perform basic functions such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, square roots, or percentages are allowed. Calculators that plug-in, utilize tape, have word processing, spelling, thesauruses, or other storage and retrieval capabilities (except basic memory functions) are not allowed. **Calculators that are a feature on a cell phone are not permitted.** Calculators are subject to inspection by exam monitors. Applicants may not borrow or share calculators at the exam site.

Cell phones and pagers are strictly prohibited from use during the exam. Please ensure your cell phones and/or pagers are placed in “vibrate” or “meeting” mode before you enter the examination room. Candidates will be reminded to turn off such devices at the test site, and any candidate who fails to follow these instructions may be disqualified from the exam. Phone calls will be permitted only in an emergency situation and will be monitored by the test administrator.

Additional Guidelines:

- Bring your Admission Card and your Photo ID with you to the test site.
- Get a good night's sleep and report to the administration site well rested.
- Eat a healthy meal prior to reporting to the test site. You want to have energy for the exam.
- **DO NOT** bring your How to Prepare Guide or any other study materials with you to the test. You will not have access to these materials during the test.
- While at the test site, be attentive to signs placed around the building and to test monitors who may give you important information about testing procedures.

VI. Exam Contact

The contact person for the Correctional Sergeant test is Matt Roehm, State Personnel Analyst with the State Personnel Department. If you have questions about the contents of this document, please call him at (334) 242-3389.

VII. General Questions about the Exam

You should contact the State Personnel Department if you have questions about the examination administration as you prepare to take the exam. Exam administrators are not allowed to divulge specific information about the content of the exam.

Reasonable Accommodations

If you would like to request special testing accommodation or have any questions concerning the test site or testing conditions, please contact the State Personnel Department at (334) 242-3389.

Rescheduling a Written Examination

If there is a conflict in your schedule, and you are unable to attend the written exam at the time and date for which you have been scheduled, you must resubmit your Application for Examination. The State Personnel Department will schedule you for the next available administration of this written test.

Test Results

Four to six weeks after completing the exam, you will receive a Notice of Examination Results postcard in the mail. This postcard will identify your score, or Band placement, for the written exam. If you have not received your score within four to six weeks, you should call the State Personnel Department

In addition to your Band placement, you may also obtain your standing, or rank on the register, online at www.personnel.alabama.gov. From the home page, you should click on "Applicants" and then "Register Standing", and follow the instructions. For security purposes, you must now create an online profile in order to access your standing.

VIII. Scoring Information

Scores from the selection procedure will come from the written test as well as an average of your service ratings for the last three years. The written test will comprise 95% of your score, while an average of your service ratings for the last three years will comprise 5% of your score. These scores will be banded. The score that you receive from State Personnel at the conclusion of the process will be a band score. The following information describes banded scoring.

Banded Scores

When the test for Correctional Lieutenant is graded, the scores will be grouped into bands. When you receive notification of how you did on the exam, you will not be given a numerical score (e.g., you will not receive a score of 95 out of 100.). Rather, you will be informed into which band your score fell. The following information is provided to help you understand the banding procedure.

What is banding?

Banding is one way to reduce the impact of fluctuations in test scores that do not provide meaningful information about differences in the ability to do the job. One important purpose of testing is to identify the differences in test scores that reflect real differences among candidates. Banded scoring is a statistical procedure for grouping raw test scores that statistically are not meaningfully different from one another. In banded scoring, bands are set objectively and mathematically. They are not manipulated arbitrarily.

Misconceptions about banding

There are many misconceptions about banding and the use of banded scores. Some of the most common misconceptions are listed below. Each misconception is followed by a clarification.

- **Misconception: Each band should have the same number of people.**

The people in a band are similar to each other in that statistically there is no meaningful difference in their scores. Sometimes Band 1 may be very large and at other times it may be small. We do not force bands to be a certain size. The size of the bands is based on the scores people obtain.

- **Misconception: Band numbers have no meaning. I don't have a score.**

Think of a band as a group of tied scores. Think of a band as a group of scores that statistically are not meaningfully different. In school, two students with average grades of 94.5 and 94.3 would both be grouped into a band called "A" because the teacher cannot be sure that .2 of a point is a real difference in achievement. Think of scores on achievement tests children take in school. The fine print on the tests always cautions you not to focus on the numerical score but rather on the comparative score which uses some grouping technique such as percentiles, standard deviations, grade levels, etc. These grouping techniques are considered forms of banding.

- **Misconception: Band numbers are the same as letter grades.**

Band 1 does not equate to an “A,” Band 2 to a “B,” etc. In school a predetermined numerical score (e.g., 92-100) equals an A. In banding, scores are banded only in relation to one another. Unlike grade school bands, the width of the bands is not set in advance. You compete only against your peers. Your scores are set in relation to your peers only.

- **Misconception: A band score on one test has the same value as a band score on another test.**

Banded scores are test specific and cannot be compared to banded scores on other tests.

- **Misconception: People who have been on the job longest should be in the top bands.**

Time spent in a job may not be the same as skill in doing the job. The people with the strongest skills (or who did best on the exam) should be in the top bands. Some of these people will have been in the job longer than others. Years of service do not always equal proficiency.

- **Misconception: A standing in Band 4 or below automatically indicates failure or ineligibility for jobs.**

This statement is false. A band score of 4 or lower is not automatically equated with failure. The true test of your employment opportunities is whether or not you can be certified and considered for a job vacancy.

- **Misconception: Banding replaced the “Rule of 10.”**

Banding did not replace the “Rule of 10.” The “Rule of 10” determines the number of bands to be certified. In the past, tied scores referred to an actual numerical score (e.g., two candidates with a score of 98.98 were considered tied) while now all of the scores within a band are considered tied.

- **Misconception: People in a band do not differ.**

When several people are placed in the same band, it does not mean that those people do not differ. Instead, it means that their scores on the exam do not differ enough to be separate scores or reflect meaningful differences in performance.

IX. State Personnel Information

Terminology

The following are terms that are used by State Personnel regarding test scores and employment that results from those scores. This section is provided to help you understand State Personnel terminology and procedures.

Register: A register is a list of all individuals who have successfully completed the selection procedure for a State Merit System job. The register is a complete list of individuals who are eligible for employment in a certain job classification.

Certification: A certification is a list of the top ten individuals on an employment register. These are the individuals who are immediately appointable to positions. A register that uses Banded Scoring may produce a certification with more than ten names. If Band 1 contains 15 names, then all 15 individuals will be on the Certification. Likewise, if Band 1 contains 3 people and Band 2 contains 25 people, then all individuals in both Bands 1 and 2 would be on the certification. Since individuals within a Band are considered to be tied, the certification cannot split up a Band. Certifications may be state-wide or specific to a county within the state.